

Victory Over Adversity

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors  through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37, NKJV).

Once there was a farmer whose old mule accidentally fell into the farmer’s dry well. The farmer heard the mule braying (or whatever mules do when they fall into dry wells). After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule but decided that neither the mule nor the dry well was worth saving.

Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

At first the mule was hysterical. But as the farmer and his neighbors continued to shovel the dirt into the well, a thought struck the mule. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel of dirt landed on his back he should shake it off and step up! This he did, blow after blow.

“Shake it off and step up ... shake it off and step up ... shake it off and step up,” he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows or distressing the situation, the old mule fought off his panic and just kept right on shaking off the dirt and stepping up.

You’re probably ahead of the story by now. It wasn’t long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of the well. What was intended to bury him had actually buoyed him—all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity!

All of us are going to face life’s hardships. When we do, we can either cave in or we can climb out. We can either submit to anxiety—which is to call into question the integrity of our

God—or we can face our problems positively and refuse to give in to panic, worry or self-pity. Life's adversities, rather than burying us, will actually serve to benefit us!

Within the burden you now carry lies the seeds to your kingdom destiny. The greater the burden, the greater is the potential for your kingdom purpose to be fulfilled.

I know it's hard to face the painful situation you are in without seeing yourself bruised and buried. However, if you are willing to step over the pain and step up to new levels of victory, then you are on your way to the fulfillment of your destiny in Christ. It is in carrying your burdens that you will find your destiny.

If you never press into the throne of God in prayer to address your greatest pain, then you will live an unfulfilled life. Sadly, many Christians are running from their burdens. God, however, is not asking us to run from them but to shake them off and step up each time the blows of life come. He's asking us to wrestle victory out of defeat and to allow the problems of life to become our stepping-stones rather than stumbling blocks.

The apostle Paul was certainly troubled with bad days. He once said, "When we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears" (2 Cor. 7:5). Wow! Paul was familiar with life's problems. This godly man was troubled and fearful. In fact, at one point it seemed that all of Asia had turned against Paul. He wrote, "the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved" (2 Cor. 12:15).

To be sure, our troubles and burdens are nothing compared to what Paul endured. But Paul never gave in to his feelings of despair and temptations. He expressed his pain but pressed on beyond it. In his most difficult time he testified, "I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our

tribulation" (2 Cor. 7:4). And he continued by saying, "God ... comforts the downcast" (v. 6). Perhaps one reason that Paul was speaking was to exhort himself to do the right thing.

Although your burdens may seem at times as if they will bury you, they could forge the path for your greatest victory. Your adversity is your opportunity to shake it off and step up. As you do, you will eventually step out of the grave of despair just like the old mule did. And better still, you will step into the realization of your kingdom destiny.

Remember, we are to be "giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). What are you waiting for? Begin to thank the Lord right now.

Editor's note: *Have you ever faced circumstances you thought were going to bury you? What did you do? Alice Smith, co-founder and executive director of the U.S. Prayer Center in Houston, has advice for how to overcome such circumstances and to turn what appears to be defeat into victory. She and her husband, Eddie, are internationally known conference speakers who equip leaders in the areas of prayer, spiritual warfare, spiritual mapping, deliverance, leadership and other Christian disciplines. Together they have written several best-selling books, including Spiritual Housecleaning and Drawing Closer to God's Heart. You can find more information about them and the books they have authored individually at .*

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